

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Annals of Iowa

Volume 70 | Number 2 (Spring 2011)

pps. 181-182

Minnesota Architects: A Biographical Dictionary

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ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

Peterson, Fred W. "Minnesota Architects: A Biographical Dictionary." *The Annals of Iowa* 70 (2011), 181-182.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.1542>

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Minnesota Architects: A Biographical Dictionary, by Alan K. Lathrop. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. xiv, 233 pp. Illustrations. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Fred W. Peterson is professor emeritus of art history at the University of Minnesota, Morris. He is the author of *Building Community, Keeping the Faith: German Catholic Vernacular Architecture in a Rural Minnesota Parish* (1998) and *Homes of the Heartland: Balloon Frame Farmhouses in the Upper Midwest, 1850–1920* (1992).

Alan K. Lathrop's *Minnesota Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* is a reference text that will serve both professionals and the public well in understanding and appreciating the architectural heritage of the upper Midwest. The book presents biographies of more than 300 individuals active from the post-Civil War era to the twenty-first century. This inventory is supplemented with accounts of some architectural firms that came into being as large commissions demanded professional collaboration. A brief introduction sketches a history of the architectural practice and profession. Drawing on such sources as censuses, city directories, interviews, obituaries, and genealogical records, the author provides the architects' dates, records of general and professional education, places where the architect practiced the profession, and affiliations with other architects. Each entry concludes with a list of notable buildings designed by the architect with dates and specific locations of each. Many of the black-and-white images that complement the text are vintage photographs presenting structures at the time they became monuments on the midwestern landscape. Although the majority of buildings illustrated are located in the Twin Cities area, an ample selection of images represent "out-state structures." Buildings in Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin are also listed in the "notable buildings" category. There are, of course, examples of every building type, including large-scale civic and corporate centers, industrial sites, religious edifices, public schools, hospitals, and domestic dwellings.

Lathrop's comprehensive work will serve as a ready tool for regional architectural research, providing basic information for scholars and local historians to use and expand on. Although the volume lists entries in alphabetical order, the cumulative effect of the work is a history of architecture in Minnesota and the upper Midwest. The visual documentation of the buildings offers vicarious journeys to architectural sites, reminding readers of how experiences are shaped by the built environment. Lathrop's scholarship provides glimpses into the lives and careers of those men and women who gave architectural form to this environment. The *Biographical Dictionary* will help readers

identify the few who have been so influential in affecting the behavior and experiences of so many who have lived in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and major cities in the upper Midwest. Iowans who have visited Minnesota as business men and women, shoppers, sports fans, or vacationers will also recognize the impact that major buildings have on those who benefit from their presence.

For Iowa architects, readers should consult David Gebhard and Gerald Mansheim's *Buildings of Iowa* (1993), a guide to important structures across the state; the recent Iowa Public Television production "A Century of Iowa Architecture," presenting 50 significant buildings of the twentieth century and interpreting their meaning in the context of function and aesthetics of architecture (www.iptv.org); the Iowa Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture's *A Century of Iowa Architecture, 1900–1999* (2004); and Wesley I. Shank's *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (1999).

Twilight Rails: The Final Era of Railroad Building in the Midwest, by H. Roger Grant. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. xiv, 275 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Gregory Ames is curator of the John W. Barriger III National Railroad Library, University of Missouri–St. Louis. He is the author of *Old Maud — A Life and Times: America's Pioneer Mallet* (2006).

At the turn of the twentieth century, there was no greater hope for a town of any size than to be on a railroad line. Railroads dominated not only the nation's economic landscape but its social and cultural life as well. To be "on the map" meant being on a *railroad* map. Many towns without a railroad felt the need to entice one in their direction or build one of their own, even in a state as well-networked with railroad track as Iowa was in 1900. H. Roger Grant, one of our foremost railroad historians, grew interested in these "twilight railroads," those built in the evening of the "railroad building craze." His latest book chronicles and evaluates the motivations, contributions, successes, and failures of eight such railroads from eight states in the Midwest from 1900 to 1930. More than "pure" business history, this book bridges economic and social as well as state and local history.

Grant, the Kathryn and Calhoun Lemon Professor of History at Clemson University, has written some 26 railroad and transportation-related books, including works on the Erie-Lackawanna, the Wabash, and the Chicago & North Western railroads. Lately, he has abandoned the large "Class 1" railroads on which he built his scholarly reputation to focus on smaller, ne'er-do-well pikes. These have special appeal to